

Announcements 2012

Powering Improvement Delivers first Asset Management Workshop (March 2012)

The first Powering Improvement Workshop of 2012 was held on the 22nd March to discuss the interlinked relationships between asset management, maintenance and safety. Speakers from HSE and Scottish Power imparted their views on this complex issue to delegates who then broke into syndicate groups for further debates. The workshop concluded with two presentations outlining significant historical failures in asset management and maintenance - BP Texas City as a macro-example from abroad and a fatal accident involving failure of test probe bushings in the UK.

Powering Improvement Message travels to Germany (May 2012)

A joint workshop with ISSA, the International Social Security Organisation, gave representatives of the UK electricity industry the opportunity to spread the Powering Improvement message beyond UK shores. At the workshop in Linosee Germany, delegates from across Europe took the opportunity to discuss the implications of asset management and maintenance on safety and share best practice across national borders.

Powering Improvement is highlighted at the ISSA International Health and Safety Conference (May 2012)

Mike Leppard (ENA) travelled to Asunción, Paraguay to deliver a presentation on Powering Improvement at the biannual ISSA International Health & Safety conference being held there.

Powering Improvement is Prominent at the ENA SHE Management Conference 2012 (May 2012)

At the annual Energy Industry SHE Management Conference on the 4th and 5th May Powering Improvement was featured prominently in the first session following the keynote speakers. Peter McCormick (PI Coordinator, ENA), Roger Bibbings (Occupational Safety Adviser, RoSPA), Dan Shears (National Health, Safety and Environment Policy Officer, GMB Trade Union) and John Steed (HM Principal Specialist Inspector, HSE) all spoke on the topic and promoted the PI initiative to the assembled industry delegates. All the presentations given at SHE2012 can be downloaded from the Energy Networks Association website.

Tim Field at ENA Speaks to Utility Week on Powering Improvement (September 2012)

We are midway through Powering Improvement, the electricity industry's ambitious bid to get the workforce at every level engaged in health and safety advancement. The Article in Utility Week September 2012 goes on to talk about the achievements and aims of the Health and Safety Strategy.

Communicating risk by mobilising the workforce

For large companies, establishing an initiative that engages across the workforce is a major challenge. Scale that up for an entire industry and the approach needs to be an innovative one among those it seeks to influence.

The electricity industry has identified this and knows that adding the human element is essential to delivering change. Energy Networks Association (ENA), the trade body for the wires and pipes of the gas and electricity industry, and Energy UK, who now represent generating companies following the merger with the Association of Energy Producers, have set about a campaign to highlight this in partnership with the unions GMB, Prospect, Unison and Unite.

Powering Improvement is the electricity industry's vision to be a world leader in health and safety by 2015. Unlike many campaigns, it aims to go further than just prescribing how companies should work. It is about engaging and sharing experience and knowledge to build upon success and identify opportunities to, quite simply, improve.



Targets and statistics are an integral part of measuring achievements in health and safety. As every practitioner in the field knows, zero is a target that may be impossible to reach but that no one should stop striving for. Certain principles can make these efforts more effective. These are the foundations Powering Improvement is built on.

A safe, healthy and competent workforce is good for individuals and good for business. That is why three key themes of leadership, improving competence and worker involvement sit at the heart of Powering Improvement. The initiative embodies the principles of HSE's "Be Part of the Solution" strategy and it is no coincidence that they share these values.

David Gartside, HSE Board Member, praised Powering Improvement at a recent SHE conference, "Powering Improvement represents a very strong commitment to managing safety and the partnership approach has been key to delivering the success so far." HSE Chief Executive Geoffrey Podger deems the industry's now 'lower risk' category was, "a result of its commitment to the work of Powering Improvement".

Success in health and safety requires leadership that promotes it as essential and engages with it visibly. Competence isn't solely about the training at an operational level and, to be effective, managers need to be able to identify risks to physical safety and the wider health of colleagues. Better health and safety is more than apportioning responsibility to take action but also having a flow of information as standard to identify and address risks.

For each year from 2010, Powering Improvement has annual focus areas. The first year's objective concerned leadership buy-in and delivered a strong commitment from the Chief Executives of the networks, generation companies and unions. Championing initiatives from the top is how a large organisation can show a determined commitment, however a true measure is the partnerships that are formed to support it, in this case, between the industry and the unions.

In 2011 the partnership and sharing of best practice delivered significant outcomes that will enable companies to address a critical area of occupational health and wellbeing in a way they hadn't before. This is more than a way of addressing problems when they arise, it is about providing a setting where the issues can be discussed before individuals and their productivity is affected.

Jane Willis, Director of Cross Cutting Interventions at HSE and Champion for the 2011 focus area, highlighted the value of a partnership approach saying, "We know it is better to prevent ill-health occurring in the first place and recognise that this is a shared responsibility."

Collaboratively raising awareness is important. Both the workforce and the management can understand the risks to themselves and to the business. Powering Improvement has given companies the opportunity to see that this level of organisational change is both achievable and effective, delivering hugely positive results to their greatest asset, the employees.

Dan Shears from GMB explained the value of this:

"Reducing injuries is a joint problem requiring a joint solution. The great thing about Powering Improvement is that this principle is implicit in everything it tries to achieve."

One example of a truly engaging project is EON's cardiovascular initiative "Keep the Beat" or their "Head Way" campaign, which included road shows around company sites and interactive sessions. Many companies have used Powering Improvement to ensure wellbeing features in health surveillance and fitness to work programmes as well as setting up fast-track physiotherapy agreements.

With national infrastructure under review, the 2012 annual focus of asset management and maintenance is particularly apt. Competency guidelines will help inform all levels of the workforce and the industry will address the 'why' as well as the 'how' when looking at risk and incidents. These will also be supported through a number of workshops and tool box talks to help highlight the issues and case studies of best practice throughout the year.

The impact of Powering Improvement continues to grow in 2012. It seeks to engage directly with contractors to build a coalition of support around the key principles. Links between this initiative and the oil and gas industry's 'Step Change' programme have been identified in addition to involving the National Skills Academy for Power on the development of a competence framework. The Institute of Asset Management will be an invaluable partner, while also informing the legacy that Powering Improvement leaves for the industry and its equipment.

Achieving the aims of Powering Improvement means continually engaging in two-way communication on all issues of health and safety to every level of the company. Achieving this demands an innovative approach. The creation of a network of advocates will provide a strong, active and dedicated group of champions within the workforce. Furthermore, it will provide new and improved lines of engagement to senior management for both successes and areas of improvement.

With such a value to workforce engagement and the importance of the human element, this network of advocates has the potential to deliver a proactive and positive flow of information through the workforce and companies. This people-focused approach fits well with Powering Improvement's annual focus of behavioural safety in 2013.

Peter McCormick, Powering Improvement Co-ordinator at ENA speaks with passion about his commitment to the initiative:

"Every SHE manager wants to avoid the dreaded knock on the door where they have to explain that someone's family member won't be coming home that night. The commitment to Powering Improvement comes from the heart."

It is hoped that with the input and support from HSE and the commitment to the principles of leadership, improving competence and worker involvement from everyone, the energy industry can create a lasting impact on the way it manages and supports better health and safety.

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Safe, not sorry

We are midway through Powering Improvement, the electricity industry's ambitious bid to get the workforce at every level engaged in health and safety advancement. Tim Field reports

The electricity industry has a vision to be a world leader in health and safety by 2015. To this end, the Energy Networks Association (ENA) and Energy UK, in partnership with unions GMB, Prospect, Unison and Unite, launched a five-year campaign in 2010, Powering Improvement. We are now half way through the programme – a good time to recap its intentions and take stock of achievements to date.

The initiative is a passionate attempt to improve the industry's safety record. Peter McCormick, Powering Improvement co-ordinator at the ENA, explains: "Every safety, health and environment manager wants to avoid the dreaded knock on the door where they have to explain that someone's family member won't be coming home that night. The commitment to Powering Improvement comes from the heart."

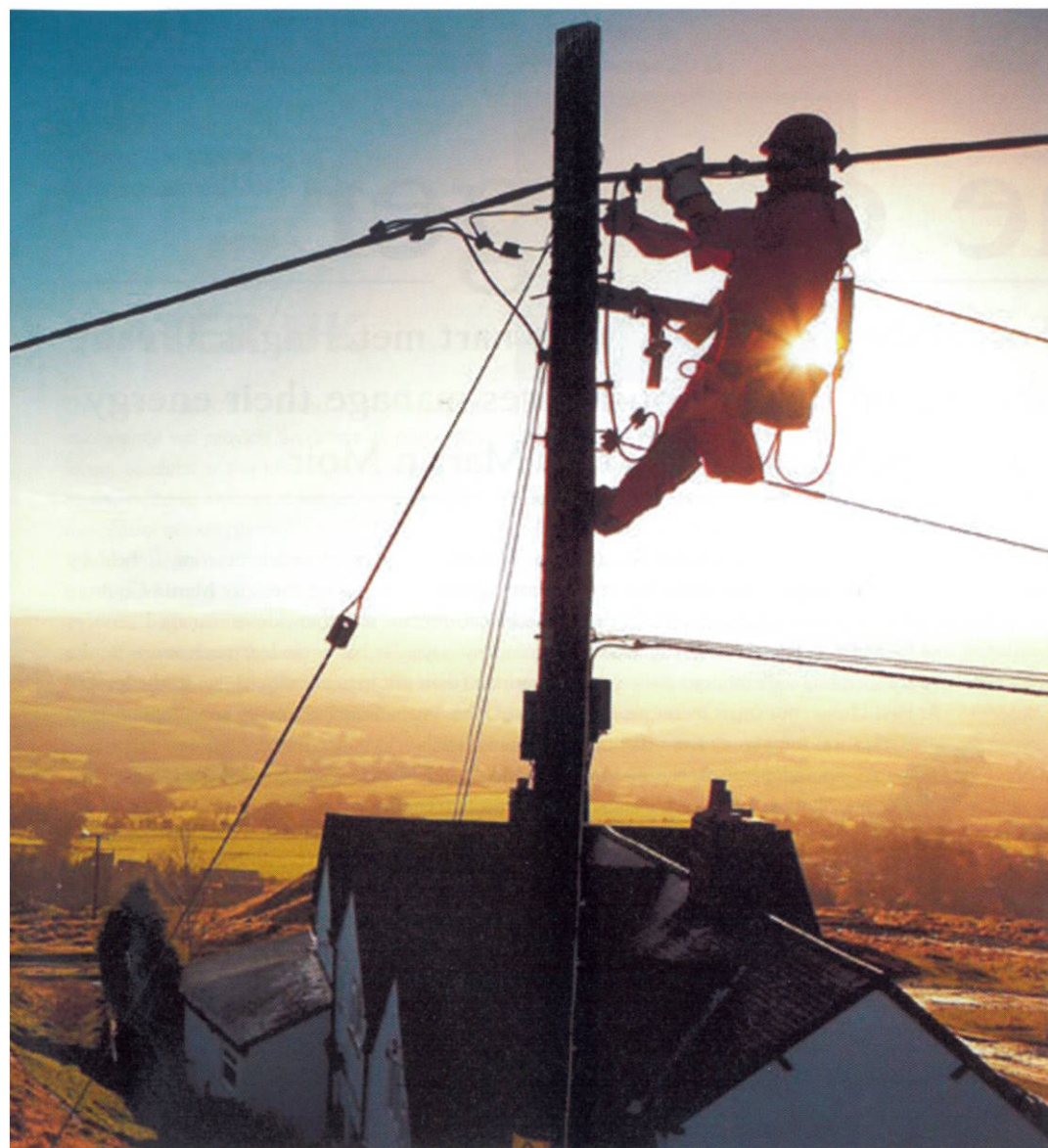
The initiative is taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue. Unlike many previous health and safety campaigns, it is not just about prescribing how companies should work. It is about engaging the workforce and sharing experience and knowledge to build on successes and identify opportunities to improve.

It has three key themes: leadership, improving competence and worker involvement. Powering Improvement also has specific focus areas each year. The 2010 objective concerned leadership buy-in and delivered a strong commitment from chief executives of the networks, generation companies and unions.

In 2011 the focus shifted to partnership and best practice sharing, with a view to getting companies to prepare for potential problems before they arise rather than simply firefighting them once they surface. Jane Willis, a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) director and champion for the 2011 focus area, says: "We know it is better to prevent ill-health occurring in the first place and recognise that this is a shared responsibility."

One example of a truly engaging project that took this approach is Eon's Keep the Beat initiative, focused on workers' cardiovascular health. Many other companies have also used Powering Improvement to ensure wellbeing features in health surveillance and fitness to work programmes.

The focus for 2012 is asset management and maintenance. Competency guidelines will help inform the



workforce, supported by workshops, toolbox talks and case studies of best practice. This year the industry is also engaging directly with contractors to build a coalition of support around key principles and drawing on the expertise of the Institute of Asset Management.

Achieving the aims of Powering Improvement means continually engaging in two-way communication on all issues of health and safety at every level of the industry. This demands innovation. For example, a network of "advocates" is providing a strong, active and dedicated group of champions within the workforce and new and improved lines of engagement with senior management.

There have been promising and real improvements so far, but the fatality of a linesman in June serves as a reminder of why this is so important. The industry knows it can never allow itself to be complacent and that there is still work to be done.

The focus for 2013 will be behavioural safety. It is hoped that with input and support from HSE, and commitment to the principles of leadership, improving competence and worker involvement from everyone,

the energy industry can really improve the way it manages and supports better health and safety.

Tim Field is head of press and public affairs at the Energy Networks Association

www.poweringimprovement.org has information, tools and case studies available to download for the industry and practitioners.

Powering improvement

Achievements to date:

- 23 chief executives signed up, including Brendan Barber, general secretary, Trades Union Congress
- 7 industry best practice workshops/events
- 10 new board/executive level interactions
- 11 formal evaluations to identify key issues, with
- over 35 initiatives or adapted processes to address them.